

## **Methods of contextualising**

**Veronika Yakobchuk**

MAGCD

2024

### **Written response 1**

The methods of contextualising provided me with an opportunity to employ earlier methods, such as iterations, cataloguing, and investigations. Previously, I had not had the chance to delve deeply into ecological problems in my design practice. One of the most challenging aspects of working in a group is finding a way to interact among our different styles, practices, experiences, and ideas, and learning how this process can lead to successful solutions for the issue of climate change using critical thinking.

Throughout this project, I became more interested and took on a stronger role as an activist, citizen, and designer. When we chose the UAL food policy as our main focus, I realised the significant amount of greenhouse gas we produce and how our consumption habits influence this catastrophe for our planet.

In the video project we created I focused on the main goals of the food policy, particularly how we can reduce the consumption of beef and dairy products in the canteen, minimise food waste, increase the use of vegetables, and support local traders. It is a reminder how much our daily choices matter for sustainability and the better coexistence of humans and nature without causing harm.

### **Written response 2**

**1. Reference: Maurer, L., Edo Paulus, Blauvelt, A., Puckey, J. and Roel Wouters (2013). Conditional design workbook. Amsterdam: Valiz.**

By choosing the UAL Food Policy, we aimed to explore how we could find an alternative format for this rather formal legislation. 'Our work focuses on processes rather than products: things that adapt to their environment, emphasise change, and demonstrate differences (Blauvelt, Maurer, Paulus, Puckey, Wouters, 2013, p. ii). Logic and process serve as the primary tools in the 'Conditional Design Workbook'. Our video presentation illustrates a process, showcasing consumption both before and after reading the food policy. Following this, the viewer is presented with a choice based on their logic, leading them to contemplate how their food choices can influence the world at large. This provokes the viewer's activist and critical

perspectives, prompting them to see themselves as integral parts of the entire system.

In the future, we envision this project as a canteen workshop for students and staff. 'Seeking to produce an art of seriality, which would allow for permutation and variability within a given rule set...' (Blauvelt, Maurer, Paulus, Puckey, Wouters, 2013, p. iii). By offering a set of tools and straightforward rules, we aim to create a comfortable environment for people to share their thoughts and ideas on the subject of climate change.

## **2. Reference: Queneau, R. (2012). Exercises in style. Richmond: Alma Classics.**

"Exercises in Style" by Raymond Queneau is an exemplary demonstration of playing with form and context. Like other climate change legislations, the UAL food policy adopts a formal and official format, making it challenging for those not deeply involved in the discussion to comprehend. One of the main objectives of the contextualising brief was to find a simpler way to represent the legislation without using scientific language, in order to attract more attention from society.

The video employs a playful and interactive format, which we believed would be very eye-catching on the screen in the canteen. Music, visuals, and the sounds of consuming make the story more relatable and intimate for everyone compared to the official food policy. Tableware serves as a new platform for publishing, making it highly accessible. The person behind the table embodies multiple roles simultaneously: eater, reader, and activist, demonstrating that even saying 'I am not making a choice' is indeed making a choice.

## **3. Reference: Berry, A. and MartinMaking, S. (2021). Public Information Actually Accessible to the Public is the Responsibility of Designers. [online]**

Eye on Design. Available at:

<https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/making-public-information-actually-accessible-to-the-public-is-the-responsibility-of-designers/>.

As another reference, we chose the article 'Making Public Information Actually Accessible to the Public is the Responsibility of Designers' on eyeondesign. This article begins with the question, 'What good are dense government documents [...] if they're not designed for public consumption?'. Each of us is a citizen with responsibilities, but also a victim of this bureaucratic world. Every day, we struggle to engage with information buried in long quotes, scientific terms, and extensive text.

In our brief, we collectively divided our roles in the group into research, highlighting the main ideas, segmenting the text, iterating visual experiments, and keeping group discussions. Our project is predicted to take the shape of an interactive workshop in the future, where members can collaborate, receive feedback, and actively engage with the topic of climate change, leading to intellectual satisfaction.

The article resonates with the idea that the ongoing work is diverse in perspectives and interpretations yet visually and thematically unified. As this project is highly creative, people may produce varied outputs, making the result subjective. Therefore, the project does not necessarily need to focus on the outcome but rather on the process, emphasising how interactions between individuals can contribute new insights to the discussion.

**4. Reference: Waerea, K. (2023). Access Questions for Self-Publishing. [online] Available at: <http://aqfsp.camberwellgraphicdesign.com/blurb/#content>.**

The main theme of Kaiya Waerea's article 'Access Questions for Self-Publishing' (2023) is the use of 'accessibility' in publishing and how it may sometimes create barriers for readers, as 'not being able to meet someone's access needs might mean they can't participate, resulting in their segregation' (Waerea K., 2023). The author mentions the importance of roles and hierarchies, which are always collaborative. In our case, working as a group allowed us to hear each other's feedback. Additionally, collaboration extends to our viewers, and by creating a physical addition to this project, participation has a backward effect, giving participants a voice.

After our second Publishing workshop, I realised how much access depends on intersectionality and the mythical norm. In our project, we aimed to be aware of barriers that most people could face. Language access in the video was provided through captions and policy excerpts on the screen. Physical access maintains both digital and physical publishing formats, allowing people to interact with each other. Infrastructure and financial access are provided as the project will be held in the college canteen, where students and staff have free participation access.

**5. Reference: Balagamwala N. (2017). Arranged!. [online]**

Available at: <https://nashra.co/#/arranged/>

One of our selected design projects is the board game 'Arranged!' by Nashra Balagamwala. Balagamwala, inspired by her personal journey to evade an arranged marriage, crafted 'Arranged!' to offer players an intimate understanding of the challenges faced by South-Asian women. Through satirical scenarios involving skin whitening, secret boyfriends, and burdensome dowries, players are both educated and entertained.

As previously mentioned, our project adopts an interactive and playful format, sparking discussions on its potential future expansions. During our brainstorming process, I pondered how to effectively convey both optimistic and dire future scenarios for our planet in a single video. This led to the concept of a board game with two teams: one advocating for a vegan diet, and the other representing non-veganism.

'Arranged!' and our climate justice video project are both significant in their political and societal impact. They solve complex issues in a playful manner, illustrating the powerful influence of format on attitudes. These topics can indeed spark disagreements and debates, even within families and small circles. That's why a board game serves as an excellent solution to encourage open dialogue and ensure that everyone's voices are heard.

**6. Reference: Tejada, R. (2018). The Decolonizing Design Reader, v1.0. [online]**

Available at: <https://www.are.na/block/3746671>

The last reference is the project 'The Decolonizing Reader' created by Ramon Tejada in 2018. Essentially, it's a Google Document filled with useful links, resources, and annotations contributed by both the author and readers, as the file is editable. It serves as a platform for inspiration, creation, and the sharing of personal experiences. Ramon left a note stating, "Most of these you are not required to read but are starting points for your own personal interests. Feel free to dig deeper for your projects and experiments."

This project is inspiring to me because while Google Docs are typically used for practical purposes like storing personal data, this file becomes a form of self-publishing that only requires internet access and a digital device. It demonstrates the diverse forms that publishing can take, influencing our project where we present tableware as a new form of publishing. Each item on the table provides content related to the climate change problem. The food on the plate,

cup, and cookies convey the consequences of our decisions. Even the tablecloth serves as an empty page for publishing, displaying data information on its surface.